Justice
May 12, 2008

Provincial Government to Provide Increased Resources to RNC

In recognition of National Police Week May 11 – 17, the Honourable Jerome Kennedy, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, today outlined the Provincial Government's Budget 2008 commitments to the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC). Minister Kennedy was joined by Chief of Police Joe Browne and members of the RNC.

In total, $3.7 million in new funding will be provided to the RNC to hire new officers, construct new officer accommodations in Churchill Falls and purchase new equipment and vehicles. Included in this funding is $718,400 for seven new officers and additional vehicles for the RNC drug unit, including one officer and police dog to create a new canine unit.

"Keeping drugs off our streets is a primary concern for both the Provincial Government and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary," said Minister Kennedy. "Far too often people in our society find themselves dealing with the justice system due to involvement with drugs. It is important to prevent the spread of illegal drugs within our society which is why increasing the number of officers on the RNC drug team and creating a canine unit was a priority for this year."

Budget 2008 has also allocated $102,700 for an Internet Crime and Child Sexual Exploitation Unit consisting of one officer and one civilian. "This unit will be a dedicated resource for the protection of the most vulnerable members of our society," said Minister Kennedy. "Those who would prey upon our young people now know they are a target and their actions will not go unpunished. No longer will such individuals be able to work under the cover of the Internet."

To continue with needed renovations to the RNC headquarters, $1.4 million has been allocated for phase two of the project which will include detailed design. Fort Townshend has been home to the RNC since 1871 and these renovations will take into consideration the historical significance of this site, while providing a working environment suitable to the operations of an advancing police force.

"The relationship between the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the Provincial Government over the last number of years has been one of mutual respect and understanding," said Chief Browne. "The steps taken in Budget 2008 will allow us to continue our goal of 'Safer Communities through Policing Excellence' and I commend the Provincial Government for their commitment to policing."

"Officers of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary are on the front lines each day and our government has demonstrated its commitment to their hard work," said Minister Kennedy. "It is a critical part of our mandate to ensure the RNC has adequate funding to do its job. Additional resources for the RNC to combat drugs and child sexual exploitation were a significant part of our blueprint and I am extremely pleased to have accomplished this in the first year of our mandate."

- 30 -

Media contact:
Ken Morrissey
Director of Communications
Department of Justice
709-729-6985, 685-6612
kenmorrissey@gov.nl.ca

2008 05 12 11:05 a.m.